

# MAURICE HINCHEY

## FOCUS ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



### I-86 WILL BOOST REGION'S ECONOMY

Of all the White House's many proposed budget cuts, the one most troubling to the Southern Tier and the Catskills is the plan to cut highway funding by nearly 29 percent, or \$9.2 billion. This poses a very real threat



to the federal share of funding promised for the upgrade of Route 17 to Interstate 86, through Sullivan, Delaware, Broome and Tioga counties, a project on which we have worked very hard.

The completion of I-86 will put many of our communities on the map, literally. Without access to an interstate, business are less likely to relocate here because they perceive that it will not be easy to move their products and employees. Many tourists won't drive through the Southern Tier because they don't want to get off the interstate. If they never drive through here, they won't stop at our hotels or eat in our restaurants, and will overlook this beautiful region of the state for family vacations because it doesn't seem easily accessible.

When the Broome County Chamber of Commerce commissioned a study on I-86 a few years ago, it revealed that our communities stand to gain a staggering \$3.2 billion in increased economic activity when Route 17 is brought up to interstate standards. It will bring new jobs

to the region and more economic opportunities to our communities. This is a matter of economic urgency. It is the most important economic development project in the region and one of the most important in the state.

It has now been five years since I first introduced the bill to designate Route 17 as Interstate Route 86 and four years since President Clinton signed the designation into law. I have worked since then to persuade state leaders to quickly make the improvements necessary to achieve interstate status and am happy to see that this project has climbed higher on the state's priority list.

Now is not the time for the federal government to cut back on available funding for crucial projects like this one. I will be fighting hard against the president's planned reduction in highway funding. After all the work that has gone into this vital project, we cannot afford to allow funding shortages to cause further delays.

### Need Help? Contact Me.

#### Binghamton:

100A Federal Building  
Binghamton, NY 13901  
(607)773-2768

#### Kingston:

291 Wall Street  
Kingston, NY 12401  
(845) 331-4466

#### Ithaca:

123 S. Cayuga St. #201  
Ithaca, NY 14850  
(607) 273-1388

#### Monticello:

18 Anawana Lake Rd.  
Monticello, NY 12701  
(845) 791-7116

[www.house.gov/hinchey](http://www.house.gov/hinchey)

### THRIVING FARMS ARE GOOD BUSINESS

Agriculture is among the largest industries in our state and in our congressional district. But up until now, almost all of the federal agriculture aid has gone to other parts of the country. Using my seat on the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, I have worked to change that and the federal government is now giving our fruit and dairy farmers more of what they need to stay in business. Over \$300 million in federal aid has been directed to apple and onion farmers who have suffered losses in recent years. Dairy farmers who have experienced grossly unfair market conditions will now benefit from price protections. It's important to keep our farms strong and healthy for the food we need as well as for the protection of open spaces. I will continue fighting to make sure agriculture in New York gets the attention it deserves.

## FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MUST CONTINUE HELPING OUR COMMUNITIES

Helping to create economic opportunity and security for working families in New York's 26th Congressional District has been my principle goal as your representative. The federal government can be a big help to local economic development efforts and I am happy to be able to report great success in directing this assistance to the Southern Tier and the Catskills.

This was an easier task when the federal budget was in the black. But the large budget surpluses inherited by President Bush have turned into large deficits mostly because of the massive tax cut he insisted on last year. Those deficits have brought about an effort on the part of the Bush Administration to severely cut programs that have been very helpful to the economy of our area.

The Community Development Block Grant program has provided tens of millions of dollars to the economic development effort in our congressional district. It has made it possible for many area businesses to expand; created revolving loan funds for business start-ups; allowed sewer and water systems to be improved and extended to accommodate business expansion; and made improvements to our available housing. Yet the CDBG program is slated by the White House for a cut of \$336 million. That's just one example of how the president's tax cut, which mostly benefits the wealthiest Americans, takes funds away from communities that rightly deserve them.

Even with the drastic cuts, the White House and the Republican leadership of the House of Representatives are simply unable to meet the country's essential needs. Recently, they passed a dangerous piece of legislation that allows the federal government to break its own spending limit and take hundreds of billions of dollars from the Social Security Trust Fund.



*Hinchey discusses business issues in Binghamton*

Going deeper and deeper into debt to pay for the tax cut is exactly the wrong thing to do. Not only does it make it harder for the federal government to contribute to economic development efforts, it makes it more difficult for average people to make their lives better. That's because interest rates go up, essentially putting an additional tax on people who need to buy a house, start or expand a business, go to college, or pay down consumer debt. The modest refund received by the average taxpayer is wiped out many times over by this indirect tax, the budget cutbacks and the interest we all have to pay on the federal debt, which is now growing again.

I strongly oppose paying for a tax cut for the wealthy by cutting programs that are helping struggling communities, taking money out of Social Security and putting us deeper into debt. As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, I am fighting to make sure that our communities receive the federal assistance they need, while bringing the federal budget back into balance.

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